



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

2006 Elections Reflect American Diversity

By Michael Jay Friedman
Washington File Staff
Writer

Washington -- Americans of diverse racial and ethnic origins and religious beliefs are seeking political office in the 2006 elections. They uphold a tradition of political pluralism and participation that dates to the founding of the United States.

From 1788, when Pennsylvanians elected three German Americans to the First Congress, to 2006, when the mayors of the nation's three largest cities -- New York, Los An-

geles and Chicago -- boast of Jewish-, Mexican- and Irish-American heritage, and the mayor of the fifth (Philadelphia) is an African American, Americans have elected as their representatives men and women of all races, ethnicities and creeds.

Several African Americans are major party candidates for some of the 33 contested

U.S. Senate seats this year. They include Republican Lieutenant Gov-



Keith Ellison is favored to win his House race and become the nation's highest-ranking Muslim elected official.

(AP Images)

ernor Michael Steele in Maryland and Democrats

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United States Commemorates U.N. Religious Freedom Resolution

Washington -- In recognition of the international importance of religious freedom, the U.S. Department of State commemorated the 25th anniversary of the principal modern document supporting religious freedom -- the U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.



U.S. Under Secretary of State Paula Dobriansky

The 36th U.N. General

Assembly passed the

declaration on November 25, 1981.

The State Department marked its anniversary in a commemorative event October 30. Speakers included Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, Under Secretary of State Paula Dobriansky and U.N. Special Rapporteur Asma Jehangir.

In his introductory re-

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marks, Ambassador for International Religious Freedom John V. Hanford III, said "Our continued vigilance on religious freedom is desperately needed," noting that the 2006 annual State Department report on religious freedom revealed that the fight for religious tolerance "is far from over." The commitment of the United States to religious freedom is embodied in the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the First Amendment to the Constitution, he said, adding, "It is that same spirit that animates Americans today." He called the U.N. declaration a "huge achievement."

U.N. Rapporteur Asma Jehangir said in the 25 years since the U.N. declaration was adopted, "the advances have been slow and reluctant." She said, "there is no single recipe for all regions of the world

to overcome the difficulties" to preserving religious freedom and there are no quick fixes. Education is part of the solution, but the right kind of education and orientation, she said. "We have seen highly educated societies behave in highly intolerant forms against religious freedom." She said it is the responsibility of governments and groups to foster tolerance and prevent advocacy of religion-based hatred.

Dobriansky said, "The freedom to worship according to one's conscience, without discrimination or harassment, is an inherent, inalienable human right and also a key component of democracy," adding it is also essential to international security.

Nations that respect individual religious freedom "serve as bulwarks against extremism and conflict,"

she said.

Scalia, citing early settlers of the United States and later immigrants who came to America to escape religious persecution at home, discussed how U.S. law safeguards religious freedom.

The United Nations first highlighted the importance of religious freedom after World War II in Article 18 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion."

Later, in the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the United Nations tackled discrimination. The 1981 declaration is a specific articulation of what is necessary "to promote and encourage universal respect for

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Inauguration of the Kaliti Prison Women's Facility



Ambassador Huddleston gave a talk at the inauguration of the Kaliti Prison Women's Facility in Addis Ababa on November 1, 2006. To her left is Pastor Daniel Gebre-selassie, President of Justice for All-Prison Fellowship (PF) Ethiopia, the NGO which started the project to provide model prison facilities for women prisoners.

Darfur Needs Credible, Effective International Force, Bush Says

By Stephen Kaufman
Washington File White House Correspondent

Washington -- President Bush called for a "credible and effective international force" to be sent to Darfur and said the government of Sudan must understand that the United States is "earnest and serious" when calling for Khartoum to work with the international community.

Speaking with U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan Andrew Natsios at the White House on October 31, Bush said Natsios had been in the country for only 10 days, but he "came back with a grim report about the human condition, a lot of people who suffer." Natsios also returned from Sudan with the understanding that the international community needs to "do something about it," Bush said.

The president said the United States will work with its global partners to "come up with a single plan on how to address this issue and save lives." He added that Natsios and other international envoys will present that plan to the Sudanese government. The plan, Bush said, would include the need for an international force to "make it clear that the international community respects human life, and the international community will work in concert to save human life."

The situation in Darfur is on the minds of the American people, Bush said, adding that those who are suffering "need to know that

the United States will work with others to help solve the problem."

The president said the Sudanese government needs to understand that when Natsios delivers a message on behalf of the United States government, "we're earnest and serious about their necessity to step up and work with the international community."



President George W. Bush and Andrew Natsios, Presidential Special Envoy for Sudan, meet with the press in the Oval Office Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2006. "The situation in Darfur is on our minds," said the President. "The people who have suffered there need to know that the United States will work with others to help solve the problem." White House photo by Kimberlee Hewitt

White House press secretary Tony Snow told reporters that Bush is "outraged" about the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

"He believes that the international community needs to step up, and he believes that the government of Sudan needs to do it as well," Snow said.

A transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061031.html>) of Bush's remarks on Darfur is available at the White House Web site.

For more information on U.S. policy, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Congo's Runoff Election "Light Years Beyond" Previous Balloting

By Stephen Kaufman
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The Bush administration congratulated the Congolese people for conducting the country's final round of voting October 29, saying that despite some incidents of violence and reports of irregularities, "this election was light years beyond anything that we've seen in the Democratic Republic of the Congo."



Election commission volunteers sort through bags of ballots on the outskirts of Kinshasa, Tuesday, October 31. (AP Images)

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack told reporters October 30 the Congolese people "should be congratulated on the kind of election that they have held."

He acknowledged reports of violence in which two election workers were killed and a polling station and ballot papers were burned, saying "under optimal circumstances, you don't want to

see those kinds of incidents occur."

"We don't like to see those things, and nobody wants to see that. Nobody wants to see violence during an election period," McCormack said, adding that despite this, the polls were "virtually free from violence."

In view of some of the obstacles, "this was really an election for which the Congolese people and the people who organized the election should be congratulated," the spokesman said.

The October 29 runoff election, which pitted President Joseph Kabila against ex-rebel Jean-Pierre Bemba, marks the conclusion of the Democratic Republic of Congo's first fully democratic polls since gaining independence in 1960.

(See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/play.html?play=washfileenlish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060731174731esnamfuak0.301037>).

The election results are expected to be announced before November 19, and many Congolese and outside observers hope the resulting

government will end years of conflict and abuse of power in the country. Both candidates reportedly have signed agreements in which they promised not to contest the results of the election.

In an October 27 statement, McCormack said the elections and the development of the Democratic Republic of Congo's democratic institutions offer "the only viable path forward for the Congolese people."

He said the vote and the subsequent foundation of a new government "will mark the successful conclusion of the transition process."

The United States will continue its support of the Congolese people as they "confront the many challenges before them," McCormack said, adding, "We remain committed to the success of this important new democracy in central Africa."

For additional information on U.S. policy in the region, see Democracy and Human Development (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/democracy_human_development.html).

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Solar Cooking Solution Changing Lives in Kenya

Seline engaged in small trade, which earned her very little income. With four children to feed, she found it very difficult to make ends meet. As a result, her family mostly ate ugali, or maize meal, and vegetables except on the few occasions when they could afford fish.

Her children were chronically malnourished; her third-born child, Ras, was nicknamed "a quarter" because her husband said one could carry the child in one palm and not feel any weight.

The boy is alive today, and Seline attributes this to the coming of the Solar Cookers International (SCI) Sunny Solutions project in Nyakach, Kenya. To her, this was a blessing.

Seline started solar cooking in March 2003 when the project began. She was one of the

most active cooks from the Mbogo Women Group and was trained to teach others to solar cook.

Life has changed for Seline and her family. She is now a solar cooker representative (SCOREP) in North Nyakach. Her husband says: "I now eat delicious meals. Look at Ras.... He looks very healthy."

Seline says all her children are healthy. The children love solar-cooked foods -- they ask for it every day, she says. Seline solar cooks on most sunny

days. Solar cooking involves the use of a small, portable device that collects energy from the sun to generate heat. Firewood is used only at night and on cloudy days. Therefore, she now collects or buys firewood only once every three days instead of daily. She estimates she saves about \$6.60 a month in fuel-wood costs. With her fuel-wood savings and earn-

Seline's husband is very proud of her and takes part in looking for customers and putting on demonstrations. He uses the CookKit to train others when Seline is busy. Customers come to them to ask how the cooker works.

As the result of public exposure in Solar Cookers International newsletters and through attendance at SCI events, Seline now has a lot of confidence. The previously shy housewife has gained respect and fame in the village and is now an outgoing and fearless trainer.

For more information (<http://www.solarcooking.org/>), see Solar Cookers International Web site. SCI is a California-based nonprofit organization.

The following article is adapted from an article by Julius Ochieng' published by Solar Cookers Interna-



Sample of Solar Cooking

ings from cooker demonstrations she was able to purchase a goat in early 2004. That goat so far has given birth to four kids.

Seline's cooking and training skills are regarded highly. Young mothers who initially shunned solar cooking have changed their minds and are now buying "CookKits," lightweight panel solar cookers. Neighbors say Seline's family now has a higher standard of living. The family's food is better and family members have nice clothing.

tional.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)♦

Laura Bush Accepts 2006 Pearl S. Buck Woman of the Year Award

Washington -- First lady Laura Bush received the 2006 Pearl S. Buck Woman of the Year award October 24 for her active involvement in issues of national and global concern -- especially education, health care and human rights -- at a ceremony in Pennsylvania at the home of the late Nobel Prize-winning author.

In accepting her award, the first lady said Americans are continuing Buck's legacy of humanitarian efforts with such programs as the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council, which provides Afghan women with jobs; the president's programs to fight malaria, HIV/AIDS and other illnesses; and such educational programs as the African Education Initiative, which is providing millions of textbooks for African schoolchildren and already has trained more than 400,000 African teachers. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-enlish&y=2005&m=September&x=20050913170409WCyeroC0.3264429>).

The award was made by Pearl S. Buck International, which praised the first lady's work on literacy, including the recent White House Conference on Global Literacy, which brought together international leaders and participants from around the world to learn from each other about successful and culturally appropriate literacy programs that could be replicated worldwide. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-enlish&y=2006&m=September&x=20060918184316eai-fas0.5702936>).

enlish&y=2006&m=September&x=20060918184316eai-fas0.5702936).

Pearl S. Buck International provides international adoption services for unwanted biracial children in such countries as China, South Korea, the Philippines and Vietnam; international humanitarian programs that assist disabled, orphaned, displaced and minority

won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1938, lived in East Asia for 40 years. She died in 1973. The novelist founded Welcome House, the first international agency to arrange interracial adoptions, and Opportunity House, which provides children in six Asian countries with quality health care and good educations.

"Welcome House has eliminated



John Long, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Pearl S. Buck International, presents Mrs. Laura Bush with the 2006 Pearl S. Buck Woman of the Year award Tuesday, October 24, 2006, at the Pearl S. Buck House in Perkasie, Pennsylvania. The Pearl S. Buck award is given to honor women who make outstanding contributions in the areas of cross-cultural understanding, humanitarian outreach, and improving the life and expanding opportunities for children around the world. White House photo by Shealah Craighead

children and their families; and the historic preservation of Buck's house in Pennsylvania.

American author Pearl S. Buck wrote *The Good Earth* (1932), a novel set in China that won the Pulitzer Prize in 1932. Buck, who

the barriers of prejudice and found loving homes for more than 5,000 children," the first lady said.

The first lady also was praised for her involvement in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

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2006 Elections Reflect American . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Erik Fleming in Mississippi and U.S. Representative Harold Ford Jr. in Tennessee.

Fifty-one black candidates are running this year for seats in the 435-member House of Representatives. In Massachusetts, former U.S. Assistant Attorney General Deval Patrick is favored to become Massachusetts' first African-American governor.

Female candidates continue to enjoy success at the polls. Fourteen women currently serve in the Senate, and 12 (including six incumbents) are on the 2006 ballot. There were 138 female members of the House of Representatives in the 109th Congress.

At the state level, six women are running for governor -- including candidates in Alaska and Massachusetts. Rutgers University's Center for American Women and Politics reports a record 2,431 women are running for state legislative seats.

These figures reflect steady efforts by both major political parties to attract candidates that will appeal to an increasingly diverse population.

Some minority groups are entering the political arena in greater numbers. Although Hispanic Americans are the nation's largest minority group, many have not yet reached the voting age of 18. Even so, two Hispanics were elected to the Sen-

ate in 2004, and 27 currently serve in the House of Representatives.

In September, a national Latino conference held in Los Angeles pledged to recruit 1 million new Hispanic voters. Louis DeSipio, a political scientist at the University of California at Irvine, praised the strategy. "Marches can get people's attention, but it doesn't necessarily get a higher percentage of the community involved in civic participation. That's what things like get-out-the-vote and voter registration drives do," he told the Los Angeles Times.

Both the Arab and Muslim communities in the United States (which partially overlap) have launched voter-registration drives and increased financial donations to political campaigns. Fully 84 percent of registered Muslims cast ballots in the 2004 election, a rate significantly higher than the national average.

Four Christian Arab Americans currently serve in the House of Representatives and one in the Senate. In 2006, candidates in Michigan and Texas hope to join them. In Minnesota, congressional candidate Keith Ellison is favored to win his House race and become the nation's highest-ranking Muslim elected official.

Asian Americans also are increasing their political presence. By 2005, some 550 Asians held political office, including two senators and five U.S. representatives.

In a notable local 2005 contest, Korean American Jun Choi defeated a four-time incumbent en route to becoming mayor of Edison, New Jersey, the state's fifth largest municipality.

Like most officeholders, ethnic political leaders typically begin their careers in neighborhood or local office. As the more successful move on to state or national office they must appeal to and represent the interests of many diverse groups.

In Massachusetts, for instance, Deval Patrick has called for an "education renaissance" among African Americans, but as candidate for governor he promises full-day kindergarten and early education for all the state's 3- and 4-year-olds.

For more information, see 2006 Midterm Elections (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy/elections.html>).

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More Students from Other Nations Earning Doctorates in U.S.

By Jeffrey Thomas
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- International students represent an important means for strengthening U.S. cultural diplomacy around the world, according to new reports that show that the United States continues to welcome more international students than any other country and that a growing percentage of the doctorates U.S. universities award are earned by students who are not residents of the United States.

In the 20th century, the United States became an educator of the world, according to a new report by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Although international students earned less than 10 percent of all doctorates awarded in the United States in 1960, by 1999, they were earning more than one-third of all doctorates in the fields of science and engineering and 17 percent of doctorates in other fields, according to the October 10 report, *U.S. Doctorates in the 20th Century*.

The largest groups of international students earning doctorates have come from China, India, Taiwan and South Korea. Students from the People's Republic of China, the largest international group, received more than 24,000 of the doctorates awarded by U.S. universities in the 1990s.

Recent trends in international student enrollment in the United States reported by the American Council on Education (ACE) in *Students on the Move: the Future of International Students in the United States* show that by 2003 international students earned 55.3 percent of doctoral degrees in engineering, 44.3 percent in mathe-

matics, and 43.8 percent in computer sciences.

Between the 1999–2000 and 2004–2005 school years, international student enrollment grew nearly 17 percent in the United States, according to *Students on the Move*.

LONG-TERM TRENDS IN DOCTORAL EDUCATION

In the 20th century, a total of 426 U.S. institutions awarded more than 1.36 million doctorates, more than three-fourths of them between 1970 and 1999, according to the NSF report.

The report describes the development of the unique U.S. graduate education in which fundamental research is conducted at universities, typically with the assistance of graduate students. According to the internationally influential U.S. model, doctoral education is "organized around an intensive, real-world research experience that prepares students to be scholars capable of discovering, integrating, and applying knowledge," the report says.

The report also discusses other important changes in graduate education. Women made up 47 percent of all U.S.-citizen Ph.D.s from 1995 to 1999 -- a more than fourfold increase from 1960 to 1964, when they earned just 11 percent of U.S. doctorates.

Minorities now earn about 14 percent of U.S. doctorates in both the sciences and engineering and in other fields as well.

THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

International student enrollment declined slightly in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, after more than 30 years of continuous growth. The ACE report attributes this decline to a variety of factors including "perceptions that it is difficult to secure visas and that the United States is unwelcoming to international students; competition from other countries; the high cost of U.S. higher education; increasing higher education capacity in countries that traditionally send a large number of students to study overseas, such as China and India; and increased anti-American sentiment around the world."

But the report says that visa processing time and visa acceptance rates have "significantly improved," and the latest data on enrollments "show a rebound."

Students on the Move: the Future of International Students in the United States (http://www.acenet.edu//Content/NavigationMenu/WhatsHot/Intl_Students_in_US.htm) is available on the Web site of the American Council on Education. *U.S. Doctorates in the 20th Century* (<http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/nsf06319>) is available on the Web site of the National Science Foundation.

For more information, see *Study in the U.S.* (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/education/study_in_the_us.html)

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U.S. Official Discusses Study in America, Student Visa Process

Carolyn Gorman, U.S. consular officer in the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade, Serbia, answers questions in an October 30 USINFO webchat on the educational exchange programs in the United States and the student visa process.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Bureau of International Information Programs
USINFO Webchat Transcript

See You in the USA: Education and Visa Issues

Guest: U.S. Embassy Belgrade
Consul Carolyn Gorman
Date: October 30, 2006
Time: 10:00 a.m. EST (1500 GMT)

Question: Dear Mrs. Carolyn Gorman, is there a way of getting visa for work and tourist visa? What are the chances for getting that kind of visas.

My life wish is to study and continue life in USA.

Answer [Carolyn Gorman]: Yes there are various opportunities for studying, working and living in the United States. For example, there are a number of educational exchange programs such as A/SMYLE for high school students. There are also University exchange programs, and the work travel program allows such students to work in the States for the summer. Also, if you have special talents such as being a computer programmer, nurse or engineer U.S. companies can sponsor you for a work visa. It really depends on what you would like to do -- I would encourage you to visit our website for more information -- <http://belgrade.usembassy.gov/>.

Broadly speaking, most people immigrate to the U.S. based on applications filed by close family members legally living there, or by American employers, or winning the Diversity Visa Lottery. Applications are currently being accepted for the Lottery until December 3, 2006. More information is always available on our website.

Q: Dear Mrs. Gorman, how can I get financial aid for studying languages, Latin and old Greek? Sincerely, Ilijana.

A: I would ask the folks at the Educational advising center who are represented at the Book Fair in our booth to answer that question. I know there are scholarships available for such programs from different universities in the U.S. and I would encourage you to contact them directly.

Q: Could you please describe what kind of visa I need to study in the United States?

A: Generally, you would need a student visa also known as an F-1 visa. This requires you to apply and be accepted by your university of choice and they will then assist in the visa application process.
IIP Webchat Moderator: Ms. Gorman, could you please describe what is needed to receive a tourist visa to the United States?

A: Essentially, one needs to convince the consular officer that you will return to your country after a temporary and limited stay in the United States. Therefore you would need to show that you have strong social and employment ties to Serbia that would obligate you to return after your trip.

Q: Dear Sir/Madam, I am very happy to know some information

about studies in the USA. Many students in My Tho City want to know about information of studying abroad. Please supply us some information. How do we get overseas study visa? What are the best universities in the USA? How about yearly tuition fees? Best wishes, Tuan Anh

A: Hi Tuan - I would recommend that you speak to Elizabeth Chung who is in our both at this moment. She is the head of the Educational Advising Center and could help you with all of these questions.

Q [kimcuong]: Three years ago, I engaged with an American. I applied for fiancé visa but my interview was failed. After that, we did not progress our marriage because the difference raised between us. The U.S. Consulate returned my document. Now, I want to study master in USA, can I get visa?

A: You can always apply for a student visa to the U.S., but as with all student visas, you must convince the consul that you intend to return to your country after your studies are over. This would also require you to be accepted and enrolled in a university which has the type of program that you are looking for.

Q [Podgorica]: Is there any visa to do both education and practical training in the U.S.?

A: Some university programs include an optional fifth year of training, it really depends on the program you choose. There are also professional training programs in the United States that are not affiliated with universities such as hotel/restaurant courses that are offered to people who want to

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U.S. Official Discusses Study in America, Student . . .

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work in that field. AYUSA or other local agencies can provide more information on these kind of career development opportunities.

Q [MyfairladyUSA]: It seems like consular officers do have the upper hand in making decisions. Those of us in the U.S. have little direction on how to handle this decision making process since it is determined at the American Embassy in that particular country. Any suggestions on this?

A: Yes, it is true that consular officers have the responsibility to adjudicate all visa applications abroad. They make their decisions based on U.S. immigration law - all applicants must qualify for a visa on their own merits. The situation of their friends and relatives in the U.S. does generally have a bearing on this decision.

Q: Dear Mrs. Carolyn Gorman, I'm interested in finishing 12 grade in U.S. What papers do I have to have in order to receive student visa? Sincerely, Nikola

A: Hi Nikola, your best bet is to talk to American Councils about the A/SMYLE program (http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/students/europe/a_smyle.htm) which is a high school exchange program. They can lead you through the process of filling out the appropriate paperwork if you qualify for the program.

Q [INAM HAQUE]: ...from Lahore Pakistan. In the past there used to be a provision for foreign students graduating from U.S. universities that allowed 18 months of training in a U.S. organization/company. I

am wondering whether this provision still exists.

A: I believe you are referring to the optional practical training year (OPT) offered by some undergraduate programs. Some undergrad programs offer OPTs and some do not. You really need to check with the particular university program you are interested in.

Q [Media Assistant Sierra Leone]: Is there any way to appeal or protest when a prospective student is refused an F-1 visa, even though there is sufficient proof that he/she has been accepted in a U.S. college and has proof that fees have been paid. We have these cases often in Sierra Leone.

A: Each U.S. Embassy has its own policy regarding appeals after refusal of the visa. I recommend that you contact our Embassy regarding the appeals policy in Sierra Leone.

Q [MyfairladyUSA]: Thank you for taking your time for this chat forum -- question -- who can you contact as a visa liaison when having problems with visa issues especially if you feel that the consular officer handling a case is not being reasonable?

A: In such unusual cases, I recommend that you send a letter to our consular mailbox at consularbelgrd@state.gov (<mailto:consularbelgrd@state.gov>) . A supervising officer will read your appeal and you will receive a response via e-mail.

Q [IAC]: Ms. Gorman, since this site seems so very international, I would like to recommend that some of the students outside of the

countries of Serbia and Montenegro explore www.educationUSA.state.gov (<http://www.educationusa.state.gov/>) to find their local advising center for any follow up questions on scholarships and study opportunities.

Q: Dear Mrs. Carolyn G., what do I need in order to get visa. Because I want to do the doctorate? Sincerely, Kricijan....

A: If you would like to pursue post-graduate studies in the U.S., you should talk to the representative from the International Academic Center, at our table at the Book Fair. In general, you need to be accepted into a post-doc program that accepts foreign students, the costs of the program must be covered by you or the school or a sponsor, and the school will help you with the visa application paperwork.

Q: Dear Sir/Madam, I am an international student in Canada. My citizenship is Vietnamese. I will graduate in next May. By this time I am applying for a seminary in the U.S. The school said that perhaps I will receive the scholarship from that seminary. I wonder if I need to come back to Vietnam for the interview after I receive the I-20? Can I go to the U.S. Embassy in Calgary to get the interview? I have been in Canada for more than four years by that time. I also have Canadian Social Insurance Number. I also was in U.S. for a summer job last summer.

Thank you very much for your help. May all the best come to you. Thu.

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Media Effectiveness Recognized by Museum, Educational Communities

By Jeffrey C. Thomas
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The MUSE Awards, presented annually by the American Association of Museums for the best digital media projects in the museum and educational world, showcase innovative Web sites.

The award winners are among approximately 17,000 museums in the United States, and "most museums of any size now have a Web presence," according to Jason Hall, the director of government and media relations at the American Association of Museums in Washington. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=October&x=200610301412231CJsamohT0.7626764>).

The Library of Congress won a silver medal in the 2006 MUSE competition for its interactive exhibit Churchill and the Great Republic, which was judged "elegant and professional." This exhibition allows students to explore Churchill's relationships with U.S. presidents and his role in World War II. "From the look-and-feel, the content, the method of delivery, and the navigation, this Web site stands well above many in existence today," the MUSE judges said. (See Churchill and the Great Republic (<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/churchill/interactive>).

The MUSE judges awarded an honorable mention in 2006 to the Na-

tional Constitution Center for Abraham Lincoln's Crossroads, which puts students in President Lincoln's shoes as he makes 13 key decisions. The interactive exhibit can be played in a rich media broadband version or a low-bandwidth HTML version. (See Abraham Lincoln's Crossroads (<http://www.constitutioncenter.org/lincoln/>).

MUSE also honored the Newseum for its daily Web exhibit Today's Front Pages, which presents the front pages of 526 newspapers from 51 countries. "The Web site successfully expresses the dynamic nature of news with global circum-spection while assuring that visitors see their

own world in new and unexpected ways," the judges said. (See Today's Front Pages (<http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/>).

Campfire Stories with George Catlin, a gold-medal winner in 2003, is a creation of the Smithsonian Institution's American Art Museum. Catlin was a 19th century American painter who visited more than 140 tribes and painted more

than 325 portraits and 200 scenes of American Indian life, according to the Web site. Using Catlin's work and audio commentary by experts, the site explores such themes as the conflict between European and American Indian concepts of land ownership. (See Campfire Stories (<http://catlinclassroom.si.edu/teachers.html>).

Additional information on the



Visitors look over the Newseum's "Front Pages" exhibit (AP Images)

MUSE Awards (http://www.mediaandtechnology.org/muse/2006muse_twoway.html) is available on the American Association of Museums' Media and Technology Committee Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Information Technology Critical in Development, Expert Says

By Mary L. Specht
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Greater use of information technology is the quickest way to boost developing economies, such as those in Africa, technology expert Wayan Vota said in an online discussion October 25.

"Technology is the fastest medium to increase economic outputs of a business or a country," said Vota, director of Geekcorps, a division of International Executive Service Corps (IESC), a not-for-profit economic development firm. "A cell phone is a great leap over no phone or a land line. A computer is much more powerful than a calculator or paper notebooks. And the Internet ... that is a resource we are only beginning to leverage."

Geekcorps provides international information and communication development programs to governments and private foundation clients by adapting computing technologies to low-electricity areas and offering computer skills training.

Mobile computing, which includes cell phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), and "smart" phones -- a kind of cell phone-PDA hybrid -- offers hope for developing countries, according to Vota. The Internet also opens up myriad possibilities for business growth.

Mobile technology and the Internet will have their place, Vota said, but the big leap in African development will come when both are fully integrated in the business culture. Businesses there will be more successful if they can use information technology "for every aspect of production and service delivery,

deals, he said. Vota cites Ghana as one success story: Accra, the Ghana city where Geekcorps and the U.S. Agency for International Development ran a technology training program for four years, is home to one of the largest Internet cafes in Africa, busyInternet.

"Ghana is now a technology powerhouse in West Africa," he said.

One of the best ways to learn about technology is by taking an internship or apprenticeship, or by learning on the job, Vota said. After an internship at Geekcorps, for example, one Malian man started his own technology company.

"Technology is increasing the world's prosperity and security," Vota said.

The transcript (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2006/Oct/25-589429.html>) of Vota's discussion and information on upcoming webchats are available on USINFO's Webchat Station (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html>).



Wayan Vota, director of Geekcorps, a nonprofit that helps make technology accessible to lesser developed countries. (IESC photo)

and consumers embrace electronic delivery to reduce transportation and transaction costs," he asserted.

Information technologies increasingly are taking hold in Africa, where mobile phone companies on the continent are growing and being bought out in billion-dollar

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

U.S. Adjusts Tactics, Maintains Basic Goal in Iraq, Rice Says

By David Shelby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The United States continually is adapting its tactics in response to new challenges in Iraq, but it remains committed to the goal of helping the Iraqis achieve stability and security, according to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

"Nobody can have a policy in which you're not making adjustments. This is a very fluid situation in Iraq; things change. It's a thinking enemy that changes tactics and changes strategy and so you have to be able to adapt to those changes," she told a radio audience October 24.

That day, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad and coalition forces commander Army General George W. Casey announced a renewed effort to reduce violence in Iraq over the next 12 months to 18 months by helping the Iraqi government define and meet a series of significant political and security goals. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenlish&y=2006&m=October&x=20061024163829MVyel-warC0.1554834>).

But, Rice emphasized, "one thing that's not changing is the United States remains committed to victory in Iraq, remains committed to helping the Iraqis get to the point where they can defend themselves and govern themselves." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenlish&y=2006&m=October&x=20061025170422idybeekcm0.3209803>).

The secretary of state said the United States' goal is to see an Iraqi government capable of providing basic services and security to its people. "It does not mean that the United States has to be there until Iraq is a full-fledged democracy. That's going to take some time. But the foundation has to be laid for democracy in Iraq," she said. "We have to be sure that we're not turning the country over to al-Qaida. ... We're not leaving a situation that is so chaotic that there is no one who can bring order."

Rice said the United States has shown flexibility in its strategies for building up the Iraqi security forces and pursuing reconstruction. She said the United States also would look for new ways to help move the political process forward. In particular, she cited the need for progress toward a national reconciliation program and a hydrocarbons resources law.

In a separate radio interview October 26, Rice said that progress is being made in Iraq despite the ongoing violence. "[I]t's hard to show the more steady progress on the political side that's being made, the fact that this is a political system that is growing and maturing, all the local politics that's going on in Iraq," she said.

She urged observers to view

events in Iraq in terms of a major historic change and "recognize that these kinds of changes are always hard, they're always turbulent."

Transcripts of Rice's interviews are available on the State Department



Iraqi National Assembly staffers count votes, as the parliament elected Jalal Talabani interim president. (AP Images)

Web site:

Interview with Bill Bennett's Morning in America (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/75134.htm>), and

Interview with Lars Larson of The Lars Larson Show (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/75111.htm>).

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Twenty-Five Nations To Join in Nonproliferation Exercise

By Ralph Dannheisser
Washington File Special Correspondent

Washington – Twenty-five countries will take part in the first Persian Gulf exercise under the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) aimed at preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems, the State Department says.

The interdiction training exercise, called Leading Edge, will be held October 30 and 31, the department said in a statement issued October 27.

PSI is a voluntary group of nations working together to halt the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and related materials to and from states and nonstate agents that raise proliferation concerns. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenlish&y=2006&m=October&x=20061027111802sjhtr op0.6953852>).

The statement noted that the exercise also will be the first held since the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1718, and includes the participation of Japan and South Korea.

Resolution 1718, passed by a unanimous Security Council October 14 after North Korea held a nuclear test, imposes stringent, mandatory international sanctions on Pyongyang and demands an end to nuclear tests and ballistic

missile launches to address what the council termed "a clear threat to international peace and security."

The State Department statement expresses U.S. appreciation for "the leadership of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE to ensure that the Gulf States will actively prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, and related materials."

It lauds "responsible nations from the region and around the globe" for demonstrating their resolve to work together to stop the spread of WMD.

Australia, Bahrain, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States "provided operational assets for the live exercise phase including ships, aircraft and special teams to improve our combined capabilities to interdict shipments of proliferation concern and deter those who would trade in materials for such weapons," the department noted.

Participating in the exercise are: Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece,

Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.

More information is available at the Proliferation Security Initiative



Weapons of Mass destruction training class in U.S. Embassy India (File photo State department)

(<http://www.state.gov/t/isn/c10390.htm>) web page.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

United States Rededicating Itself to Middle East Peace Process

By Stephen Kaufman
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States is renewing its efforts to restart a peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, seeking to do "practical work on the ground," according to the top State Department diplomat on the Middle East.

"Now that the 'Eid [al-Fitr] holiday is finishing up, ... we're going to re-devote ourselves to making this progress," C. David Welch, assistant secretary for Near Eastern affairs, told reporters at the State Department October 27.

Asked about the possibility of an international conference to discuss Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, Welch said the United States is happy to have discussions and meetings, but "what definitely counts is what goes on, on the ground."

He said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's recent trip to the region made progress on issues related to access and movement in Gaza. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenlish&y=2006&m=October&x=20061004165516ndyblehs0.8831293>).

However, Welch acknowledged continued "difficulties on both sides," citing the continued plight of an Israeli soldier who was kidnapped in Gaza in June plus divi-

sions among Palestinian leaders between President Mahmoud Abbas and the Hamas-led Palestinian government.

"Regrettably, despite all efforts to encourage some form of agreement by the Hamas government to the conditions that President



Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs C. David Welch

Abbas laid out in the [U.N.] General Assembly ... there's still no answer from them, or any answer that comes is not a positive answer. That's really an unfortunate situation," Welch said. The international community has demanded that Hamas renounce terrorism and recognize Israel's right to exist for the Palestinian Authority to receive additional international aid. However, Hamas

has yet to agree to those demands, and the organization withdrew from a tentative agreement it made with Abbas that established guidelines for a Palestinian unity government after Abbas told the U.N. General Assembly September 22 that the incoming unity government would meet the international community's requirements.

Welch also responded to press reports that Palestinian Interior Minister Said Siyam has been soliciting funds from countries such as Iran, but said the organization has not been able to raise a substantial amount of money.

"I think if you check very carefully you will see that all efforts by Hamas to raise funds from governments have come up with pitifully small results," he said, and suggested the interior minister instead devote his efforts to "staying home and taking care of the law and order situation."

For more information on U.S. policy, see The Middle East: A Vision for the Future (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/me_vision.html).

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U.S. Official Discusses Study in America, Student . . .

(Continued from page 10)

A: You should contact our Consulate in Calgary with your question. You can find contact information for all U.S. Embassies and Consulates on www.travel.state.gov (<http://www.travel.state.gov/>).

Q: What are the requirements for scholarships for English learner's students from Serbia.

A: As with the other inquirers interested in studying in the U.S., I would suggest that you talk with the Educational Advisor at the American table at the Book Fair.

Q: I was an exchange student in the U.S. through a-smyle program. I am interested on studying for college in the U.S. Am I able to get another student visa? Thank You, Nevena.

A: Yes it's possible to get another student visa. You just need to find a university and program that will accept you and you need to meet the basic qualifications for the stu-

dent visa that were described in the answers to the other questions.

Q: Dear Mrs. Gorman, my daughter is in U.S. on Doctorate. When she was 14 she got enrolled in undergraduate studies. She got MM degree in Belgrade, Serbia and also in U.S. Now she is the youngest student of DM degree. She is an excellent student with the highest marks. She is very talented pianist. I can give you her biography.

My questions are: Can she get a green card after five years spent in the U.S.? Can she get it based on her great achievements? If it is possible, what documents are necessary? Thank you so much, Vesna.

A: It is very likely that someone with your daughter's talents could qualify either for our visa for people with extraordinary ability or she may find a U.S. company that would like to hire her and cannot find an American who is suitable

for the job. In that case, the company would assist her in applying for a work visa. That visa could be in our temporary category or it could be an immigrant visa for working, which is the Green Card. She can find more information about work visas or immigrating to the U.S. at www.travel.state.gov (<http://www.travel.state.gov/>), or she might want to contact an immigration lawyer to assist her in determining which category of visa would best suit her abilities and job prospects.

IIP Webchat Moderator: We'd like to thank Carolyn Gorman for her time today as well as all of the participants. Thank you and we hope to see you at our next chat.

[A transcript of today's Webchat will be available on our USINFO Webchat Station (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html>)

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United States Commemorates U.N. Religious Freedom . . .

(Continued from page 2)

and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion."

The document recognizes the right to worship freely, establish humanitarian institutions, perform rites, observe holidays, publish and teach religion without discrimination by other groups or governments.

The U.N. declaration on belief-

based discrimination states that infringement of freedoms of religion, conscience and belief "have brought, directly or indirectly, wars and great suffering to mankind." Understanding, tolerance and respect for differences is critical for achieving world peace, social justice and friendship among nations, according to the declaration.

"We need to do something much more creative to bring people back as human beings rather than Muslims or Christians or Jews ...

because we are at the end of it all human beings," said Jahangir

For additional information, see International Religious Freedom (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/intl_religious_freedom.html).

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Panel Urges Incoming U.N. Secretary-General To Prioritize Reform

By Stephen Kaufman
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- A former president of the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) and a renowned international scholar are urging the incoming U.N. secretary-general to place management reform at the top of his agenda, arguing that improving the organization's effectiveness is in the interest of the entire global community.

Speaking in Washington October 25 at a panel discussion held by the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, Ambassador Jan Eliasson, former Swedish foreign minister who also served in 2005 as president of the 60th UNGA, and Edward Luck, professor of international and public affairs at Columbia University in New York, said there is "unfinished business" for Ban Ki-moon, who will succeed Kofi Annan on January 1, 2007.

"[Ban Ki-moon] has said many times that job one, come January 1, is to do the management reform and move as far as he can on it," Luck said, adding the new secretary-general will do so "not because it is Washington's agenda, but because it should be the organization's agenda."

Luck urged Ban to learn from previous efforts to reform the organization and to stay in close contact with the member states in order to give them a sense of ownership in the reform process. "My impression is he's not someone who

wants to put out huge visions that are his personal visions. He wants to find out what the member states want," Luck said.

The United States and other major financial donors to the United Nations have expressed their desire to see the organization become more transparent, accountable,



Ambassador Jan Eliasson
Former Swedish foreign minister

and efficient. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060912190452esnam-fuak0.2124292>).

It is a mistake to believe that other member states, such as the Group of 77 developing nations, view management reform as "somehow ... not in their interest," Luck said.

"I wouldn't assume that the G-77 are irrevocably and eternally opposed to any sensible reform of management in the organization. I

think the fact that this was assumed at the beginning of the process ... tended to have that, I think, unfortunate consequence," he said.

He said it is unfortunate that more was not done when there was "sufficient" political momentum to move forward on management changes when the Volcker Independent Inquiry Committee issued its 2005 report on the U.N. Oil-for-Food Program scandal. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Nov/02-146342.html>).

"In terms of management, I would assume that the new secretary-general will come up with something that is a bit of a mix of the old existing proposals and some new ones. I think people are looking for new ideas, and yet there are some things on the table that still make a good deal of sense," he said.

As an immediate priority, Luck urged Ban to focus heavily on human resource questions, saying merit should be used as a means of recognizing and hiring U.N. employees.

Ambassador Eliasson urged the incoming secretary-general to create a broad sense of ownership of the reforms, even before officially assuming the post.

"Now is the time for this transition team which has two and a half months to go ... to consult with

(Continued on page 18)

Panel Urges Incoming U.N. Secretary-General To . . .

(Continued from page 17)

member states and make sure that management is embraced by all member states. I think he should see some of the key actors and [make proposals] to them so you make sure that management is a responsibility for all," Eliasson said.

The ambassador also said that throughout the reform process, the United Nations should not lose sight of its three pillars -- peace and security, international sustainable development, and human rights.

FORMER UNGA PRESIDENT REFLECTS ON PRIOR REFORMS

Eliasson discussed some of the reforms during his term as UNGA president, such as the creation of the Peace Building Commission, designed to maintain support for countries that have undergone recent conflict in order to prevent violence from breaking out again.

"In 50 percent of the conflicts during the last 20 years they have erupted again in some form within five years. It is an unacceptable statistic," he said.

He also welcomed the Central Emergency Response Fund as a means of providing for immediate needs following natural disasters when most fatalities occur and avoiding the delays involved in soliciting funds from donor nations.

Early 2006 saw the creation of the Human Rights Council, a group that the Bush administration has

criticized for failing to exclude human rights violators and for focusing most of its attention upon the Middle East conflict as opposed to other global situations. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060906174917bcreklaw0.4854853>).

Eliasson said he felt the council has "real legitimacy," but acknowledged that it has "reflected some of the bad habits of the commission," referring to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights that the council replaced in March.

He said he felt that human rights remain a pillar of the United Nations. "I would go as far as to say that human rights is the soul of the United Nations."

GLOBALIZATION DOES NOT EQUAL MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

In his remarks, Eliasson also reflected upon the state of globalization and the continued lack of understanding among peoples, citing the recent controversy over Danish cartoon depictions of the Prophet Muhammad as an instructive example.

"We casually believe that we know so much about each other ... and [yet] what do we see?" he asked.

"I would bet you that only 2 percent of the Danish population knew what depicting the Prophet would mean to the Muslim world. ... And I would bet you also that

of those who rioted on the streets of Damascus and burned the Scandinavian embassies, two percent of them knew that the Danish government could not ban an article in a paper in Denmark," he said.

He also warned against the risk of defining "outsiders," such as those of different faiths, nations, or ethnic groups, as threats. If the outside world or minorities become a threat, extremists and politicians can use them as scapegoats for problems such as crime, drugs, diseases and unemployment, he said.

"So we would see the outside world as a peril and a danger, and not as a potential of possibility -- and in this age of globalization can you imagine the nightmare we are building?" he asked.

More information (<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/>) on the panel discussions and the Wilson Center can be found on the center's Web site.

For additional information on U.S. policy, see The United States and the United Nations (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/UNGA_2005.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

U.S. Agencies Award Grants To Study Ecology of Infectious Diseases

Washington -- Unprecedented changes in biodiversity over the past 20 years have coincided with the emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases around the world.

To address this problem, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will fund eight projects under the Ecology of Infectious Diseases (EID) program, a multiyear joint agency effort in its seventh year of funding, NIH officials announced October 27.

Potential benefits of the program include development of a disease-transmission theory, better understanding of unintended health effects of development projects, better forecasting of outbreaks and a better understanding of how diseases emerge and re-emerge.

"The joint program supports efforts to create a predictive understanding of the ecological and biological mechanisms that govern relationships among human-induced environmental changes and transmission of infectious diseases," said Samuel Scheiner, program director in NSF's biological sciences directorate, which funds the EID program along with NSF's geosciences directorate.

Interdisciplinary projects funded through the program will study how large-scale environmental events -- such as habitat destruction, biological invasions and pollution -- alter the risks that viral, parasitic and bacterial diseases will emerge in humans and animals.

Previous research focused on diseases only after they had reached

humans, or only when they occurred in nonhuman animals, said EID program directors at NSF and NIH's Fogarty International Center.

The program links the human-animal components to produce a comprehensive understanding of disease transmission, said Joshua Rosenthal, NIH program director for EID.

The studies will contribute knowledge and analytical tools to help public health officials, wildlife managers, farmers and others control the spread of diseases among humans, domestic and wild animals and crops, said EID scientists.

The 2006 awards include developing a better understanding of the effects of avian migration and human-caused change on the distribution and risks of avian influenza, predicting variations in West Nile virus transmission in different regions, and understanding the changing dynamics of malaria and other diseases in Papua New Guinea.

Awardees also will study disease resistance in estuarine populations such as oysters and the response to climate change; sudden oak death and links among pathogens, hosts and environments; and the influence of environmental change on how parasites move through human, invertebrate and environmental pathways.

The coincidence of broad-scale environmental changes and the emergence of infectious diseases may point to underlying and predictable ecological relationships. Yet basic and applied research in



An entomologist with the Suffolk County Department of Health Services tests mosquitos for West Nile virus. (AP Images)

infectious disease ecology has been largely piecemeal, Scheiner said.

The full text (http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=108141&org=NSF&from=news) of the press release is available at the NSF Web site.

For more information on U.S.-supported efforts to eradicate disease, see Health (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/health.html).

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)♦

Global Market Exists for Better Tuberculosis Tests, Report Says

Washington -- A large and mainly untapped global market exists for more effective, affordable tests to diagnose tuberculosis (TB) in low- and middle-income countries, where most cases now occur.

This is the major finding of a new report, *Diagnostics for Tuberculosis: Global Demand and Market Potential*, released October 25 by the World Health Organization (WHO) Special Programme for Tropical Disease Research and Training (TDR) and the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND).

The report was financed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and involved more than 100 public health and industry experts and several international agencies.

Most people in the world who have TB or live in TB risk areas do not have access to rapid and accurate testing, according to the report, regarded as the most comprehensive review of the TB-diagnostics market.

Better tests could bolster international TB-control efforts and respond to a large market demand, the report added, calling for industry investment in new diagnostic tools targeted at low- and middle-income countries.

A third of the world's population is infected with latent (nonactive) TB and is at risk of developing the active disease. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile->

eng-lish&y=2006&m=September&x=20060929124043lcni-rellep8.063906e-02).

DIAGNOSING TB

HIV is fueling TB epidemics in many countries, and multidrug resistance is a growing threat; 1.7 million people a year die from TB, many because the infection is undiagnosed or diagnosed too late.

"We need simple tests to accurately screen for and identify active tuberculosis," said TDR Director Dr. Robert Ridley October 25.

New tests also are needed to monitor treatment response, identify bacterial drug resistance and detect latent infection in people at greatest risk for progression to active TB, he added.

Of the estimated 9 million people who develop active TB every year, most do not receive a laboratory-confirmed diagnosis. Only about 2.2 million TB cases annually are diagnosed and reported with sputum-smear (saliva, mucus or phlegm coughed up from the respiratory tract) microscopy, the most widely available test.

Other cases are diagnosed through an inefficient and sometimes wasteful combination of chest X-rays, bacterial cultures and guesswork.

The global market for TB diagnostics is more than twice that of the market for TB drugs. Worldwide, about \$1 billion is spent on TB tests and evaluations that screen



Pretty Philile, takes her tuberculosis tablets at a clinic in Durban, South Africa. (file photo- AP Images)

100 million people annually; \$300 million is spent on drugs.

MORE EFFECTIVE TOOLS

In low- and middle-income countries, where three-quarters of TB tests and screenings are performed, \$326 million is spent annually on TB diagnostics. An even larger potential market exists for more effective, affordable tools.

Between 70 percent and 90 per-

(Continued on page 24)

Health Coalition Targets Diseases Affecting More than 1 Billion

Washington -- An international coalition of health agencies, advocacy groups and pharmaceutical companies is launching a campaign to provide drug treatment for tropical diseases that afflict more than 1 billion people.

The World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are among the members of the coalition, which involves more than 25 partner organizations, according to the WHO press release October 26.



Elephantiasis

The coalition proposes to fight a set of diseases known collectively as helminthiasis, which are caused by the presence of worms in the body. The approach calls for preventive use of drugs against a broad range of worm infections, combining treatment regimens for four common diseases. They are river blindness (onchocerciasis), elephantiasis (lymphatic filariasis), schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis.

"In the same way as we protect people against a number of vaccine-preventable diseases through-

out their lives," said Dr. Lorenzo Savioli, director of WHO's Department for the Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases, "the regular and coordinated use of a few drugs can protect people against worm-induced disease, improving children's performance at school and the economic productivity of adults."

The campaign is outlined in a newly published manual, *Preventive Chemotherapy in Human Helminthiasis*, which provides guidance on how and when the drugs should be administered. The effort is made possible by the donation of drugs by major pharmaceutical companies such as Johnson & Johnson, GlaxoSmithKline, Merck & Co. Inc., Pfizer and others.

"These guidelines are exactly what is needed to assist the control of neglected tropical diseases," said Alan Fenwick, the director of USAID's Neglected Tropical Disease Project. "As both the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the USAID recently have increased their support for control and other donors are coming on board, it is essential that strategies for control are based on sound evidence-based knowledge, and these guidelines provide a strong foundation for developing appropriate strategies."

These diseases cause various impairments with potential lifelong implications, such as impaired growth and development of children, complications during pregnancies, underweight babies, disabling disfigurements, blindness, social stigma, and reduced economic productivity and income, the WHO said.

"We need to urgently work together to improve access to rapid-impact interventions and quality care," said Dr. David Heymann, WHO's acting assistant director-general for communicable diseases. "The need to do so is incontestable from all perspectives: moral, human rights, economic and global public good."

The full text (<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2006/pr60/en/index.html>) of the press release and more information (http://www.who.int/neglected_diseases/en/index.html) on neglected tropical diseases are available on the WHO Web site.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)



Onchocerciasis (River blindness) has been one of the most important diseases for science and public health over the last century. (File photo)

U.S. Firms Gearing Up to Tackle Environmental Challenges

By Andrzej Zwanecki
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Major U.S. corporations are moving aggressively to address climate change and other environmental concerns through entrepreneurial, technology-driven solutions, experts say.

"Almost every day we have major businesses making statements about voluntary commitments to reduce greenhouse gas [GHG] emissions," Andrew Shapiro, the founder and head of Green Order, said in an October 13 interview. "U.S. companies have seen value and are investing in [better] energy and environmental performance."

Green Order is a consulting firm that helps companies run their operations in an environmentally friendly manner.

Corporations act to reduce their energy use, harmful emissions and waste because they expect savings from increased energy and operational efficiencies. Companies also believe that their environmental initiatives will enhance their reputation with investors, customers, regulators and communities concerned about GHG emissions, according to an October 2006 report by the Pew Center on Global Climate Change.

GHG emissions, primarily of carbon dioxide and methane, contribute to global warming. Some scientists believe that the warming could get worse, making the climate less human friendly, if emissions are not stabilized.

Experts agree that improving energy efficiency can have the most

direct impact on a company's profitability and on its "environmental footprint." For example, since 1990 chemical conglomerate DuPont has saved \$3 billion and cut GHG emissions by more than 70 percent. Advanced companies such as DuPont and American Electric Power can leverage their environmental experience into process improvements to increase productivity and reduce emissions without impeding their growth plans.

A good environmental reputation also has proved to create tangible benefits for companies. For example, aluminum-maker Alcoa was invited by Iceland's government to locate its plant in that country based on company's environmentally friendly image. At Whirlpool such an image gives a competitive edge to company's energy efficient home appliances.

In addition, companies with sound environmental strategies and practices are likely or highly likely to see improved financial performance, according to 2003/2004 studies, one by researchers from Sydney University and the University of Iowa, and another by the United Kingdom Environment Agency.

RIPPLE EFFECT

Some multinational companies based in the United States, such as Alcoa, DuPont and floor-maker Interface Flooring Systems, recognized the value of more environmentally sustainable strategies in the early 1990s. These firms are now regarded widely as the most environmentally responsible corporations in the world.

Other U.S. companies started recognizing energy-related and other environmental issues as relevant to their operations only recently as a result of dramatic shifts in the marketplace and in the international and national political arenas – rising energy prices, growing concern about global climate change and pressure from governments, investors, consumers, environmental groups and the media.

Shapiro said there has been a "sea-change" in the past two years in how U.S. companies think about the environment.

In 2003, major U.S. corporations largely were ignoring these issues, according to a report by Ceres, a nongovernmental organization working to address environmental challenges. Since then, however, major corporations in many key industries have begun implementing environmentally friendly initiatives, Ceres said in a March 2006 report.

The watershed year was 2005 when Wal-Mart embraced energy efficiency and environmental stewardship and announced ambitious environmental goals, says Peter Clarke, a senior associate at First Environmental, an environmental management consulting firm.

Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, vowed to buy 100 percent of its electricity from renewable resources, produce no waste, double the fuel efficiency of its trucks and reduce GHG emissions by 20 percent. It also said it expected its 60,000 suppliers worldwide to follow its lead if they wanted to continue doing business with Wal-

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U.S. Firms Gearing Up to Tackle Environmental . . .

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Mart.

Because of the retailer's global reach, "this will have a ripple effect across the planet," Clarke said in an October 20 interview. "Never before there's been a company with this much clout that has gone to its suppliers and demanded that they improve their environmental performance."

FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT

The prospects for broader implementation by U.S. businesses of environmentally friendly strategies will reflect, in part, the pace of regulatory reforms and trends in energy costs.

According to the Pew Center's report, some U.S. corporations are reluctant to pursue more ambitious carbon-reducing initiatives because of continued uncertainty about the impact of global warming and related regulatory policies.

The United States currently relies on voluntary reductions in GHG emissions in the private sector. Several state governments, however, have moved to place mandatory caps on these emissions, and nearly all of the 31 major corporations surveyed by the Pew Center view some kind of federal GHG standards as inevitable.

Many want to prepare for those standards to be in the best position to manage a related carbon-pricing scheme. But others prefer to wait with major environmental investment for clear regulatory and market signal.

"The only thing that business likes even less than regulation is uncertainty," Shapiro said.

A ranking of the world's top 100 most sustainable corporations done by Corporate Knights, a Canadian environmental magazine, and Innovest Strategic Value Advisors Inc., a British research company, includes 17 U.S. corporations, as opposed to nearly 70 European companies on the list.

The ranking defines as "sustainable" those companies that "have displayed a better ability than most of their industry peers to identify and effectively manage material environmental, social and governance factors."

However, U.S. companies are catching up with leading European rivals thanks to a more entrepreneurial, market-driven and technology-focused approach, Shapiro said.

Alcoa developed lighter, longer-lasting commercial truck wheels, betting on automakers' intent to build lighter, fuel-efficient vehicles. And United Technologies Corporation came out with a unique tech-

nology designed to reduce significantly emissions from coal-fired power plants, hoping to capture a large portion of the market for clean electricity.

According to experts, United Technologies' chief operating officer, George David, expressed beliefs of many U.S. executives when he said that the "best sustainability efforts, like everything else in human endeavor, are those coming from marketplace not mandates."

The Pew Center's report (http://www.pewclimate.org/global-warming-in-depth/all_reports/



Nature can help reduce greenhouse gas, but only to a point (File Photo)

corporate_strategies/index.cfm) on climate change related corporate strategies can be viewed on the center's Web site and Ceres' report (<http://www.ceres.org/pub/publication.php?pid=84>) on climate change related corporate governance can be viewed on the

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Global Market Exists for Better Tuberculosis . . .

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cent of the potential market for new TB diagnostics is in 22 countries that have the highest TB burden.

High-tech molecular and rapid-culture diagnostics available in developed countries are too complex and costly for many settings where TB is most prevalent, the report said.

Yet traditional sputum-smear, X-ray and culture tests might not identify active TB accurately, particularly in HIV-positive patients.

In low- and middle-income countries alone, more than 66 million sputum-microscopy examinations, 39 million chest X-rays and 8.5 million cultures are performed each year on suspected TB patients using technologies developed 50 to 100 years ago.

Such diagnostics might miss critical distinctions between latent and active TB, and between drug-sensitive and drug-resistant forms of the disease.

"There is a huge opportunity for diagnostics developers to expand their investments to meet this very real need," said FIND Chief Executive Dr. Giorgio Roscigno.

RANGE OF TB TESTS

For the report, an international net-

work of researchers and policy experts examined for the first time the full range of tests available for active disease, latent infection, drug resistance and treatment response.

Despite increased global funding for TB control and the emergence of public-private partnerships to support product development, the report said, commercial interest in TB diagnostics is limited by a lack of information on the TB-diagnostics market, especially in the developing world.

Most recently developed tests serve laboratories in industrialized countries, where less than 5 percent of global TB cases are found.

"Despite scientific progress that is rapidly changing other fields," said Dr. Mario Raviglione, director of WHO's Stop TB Department, "most of the world's TB patients have access only to conventional microscopy," which requires repeated testing, may miss half the cases, and works poorly for HIV co-infected patients.

A test that detects latent infection and predicts progression to active disease could have the greatest use, with a potential market of 204 million patient evaluations a year, the report concluded.

"Such a test," the report stated, "if widely implemented and accompanied by successful treatment,

could revolutionize TB control."

Large markets also exist for point-of-care screening (at clinics and health posts), with a potential available market of 79 million patient evaluations a year, and less-revolutionary replacement technologies for smear (49 million patients), culture (20 million patients) and drug-susceptibility testing (23 million patients).

The full text (<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2006/pr61/en/index.html>) of a press release on the report is available on the WHO Web site.

For information on U.S. policy, see Health (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/health.html).

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Laura Bush Accepts 2006 Pearl S. Buck Woman of . . .

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(PEPFAR) and her visits to many countries to highlight effective programs that work with partner governments and local relief agencies for the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS.

As the leader of Helping America's Youth, a White House effort to raise awareness about the challenges facing at-risk youth, the first lady travels across the United States to highlight successful family, school and community programs.

Past recipients of the Woman of the Year award include Nobel Prize-winning author Toni Morrison, Burmese human rights activist and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and former first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

For information on U.S. policy, see Women in the Global Community (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/women.html) and Humanitarian Assistance and Refugees (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/refugees.html).

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Ceres' Web site.

The U.S. government supports corporate environmental efforts through voluntary programs that include:

Building Technologies Program (<http://www.eere.energy.gov/buildings/>), which works with the building industry and manufacturers to promote energy efficiency;

Climate Leaders (<http://www.epa.gov/climateleaders/>), designed to develop long-term comprehensive climate change strategies;

Energy Star (<http://www.energystar.gov/>), which

offers technical assistance on proven energy efficiency strategies;

Green Suppliers Network (<http://www.greensuppliers.gov/gsn/home.gsn>), which aims to leverage purchasing power of large manufacturers to lessen environmental impacts of their suppliers;

Industrial Technologies Program (<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/industry/>), which promotes technologies intended to help industries improve their energy efficiency and environmental performance;

Save Energy Now (<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/industry/saveenergynow/>), which helps industrial plants identify ways to

reduce energy use in key industrial process systems;

SmartWay Transport Partnership (<http://www.epa.gov/otaq/smartway/index.htm>), which offers technical assistance on fuel-saving strategies; and

Waste Wise (<http://www.epa.gov/wastewise/>), which promotes waste prevention, recycling and buying/manufacturing products with recycled content.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)♦